

KALAPI

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A. D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

KALAPI

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gujarati literature is fortunate to have a good number of great poets. Kalapi, who flourished in "Pandit Yug" the literary period of scholar-writers is one of the noteworthy poets of modern Gujarati literature. In the annals of Indian literature he may not perhaps be recorded as a great poet but he is certainly a good poet; especially owing to the genuineness of feelings and simplicity of expression. Kalapi's poetry has immediate effect upon its readers. His favourite subjects are nature and love, both being the eternal subjects of poetry.

Kalapi wrote some prose too. During a brief life of just 26 years, he wrote a lot and almost all his works have literary qualities. Besides poetry, he wrote letters, dialogues, travelogues, etc. and all have creativity in them. He was considered a poet of the youth. He appealed to many young men and women and inspired them to write. Poetry always appeals to the lover of beauty and Kalapi's poetry makes the reader a lover of poetry too. Kant, an eminent contemporary poet, has truly said of him: "Kalapi has nurtured the heart of Gujarat." This popularity as a poet has given longer life to his poetry but it has proved harmful too. He has been greatly praised and notoriously abused.

The chief reason for the popularity of Kalapi's poetry is of course its beauty, but at the same time, certain events in his life have aroused the curiosity of his readers. He is perhaps well-known and talked about for these incidents relating to his personal life. He was a ruler of a small state situated in a far away corner of Saurashtra. He accepted the throne reluctantly and was anxious to renounce it. A king writing poetry, falling in love, confessing it and writing love poems was not very common at the close of the 19th century. This fact added spice to his poetry. He died at the early age of 26, but the short life that he lived passed in conflicts and confusions mostly about affairs relating to the heart. His life is shrouded in a lot of mystery but Kalapi always remained a popular person. Some abused him but this only added to his popularity.

Kalapi shot into fame ever since a volume of his poetic works 'Kalapino Kekarav' was published posthumously and till today he remains one of the most controversial person and poet of Gujarat. Many things, favourable and unfavourable, are said about his life and works. Statements and counterstatements are made, proofs and references given and discussions are going on till today. But the most important point is that Kalapi has been studied all the time. Unfortunately, it has failed to reveal Kalapi - the person and the poet - completely and truthfully. Till date the mystery shrouding his life and death remains.

2. LIFE AND PERSONALITY

Kalapi , the second son of Maharaja Takhtasinhji, the ruler of a small state, Lathi, in Saurashtra, was born on January 26, 1874. Having lost his father at the tender age of five, Sursinhji - that was the name given to the prince - was greatly influenced by his mother Ramaba, a woman of remarkable personality. She too died when Sursinhji was just fourteen. The shock and pain of it left a permanent scar on the tender, sensitive heart of the poet.

The prince's formal education began at Rajkumar College, Rajkot, when he was eight years old. He was at Rajkot for the next nine years. This period, i.e. from 1882 to 1891, was the most significant period in his life. These were the years that made Kalapi what he was, a sensitive, thoughtful and creative person and a poet. Rajkumar college was a special school for the sons of Royal families. There the princes were educated and trained to be rulers and leaders of the society. Unfortunately, Sursinhji did not complete his education and dropped out of school half way through. A number of incidents led to this. Chief was his mother's demise. He never felt at home in Lathi. A deep, inexplicable sense

of loneliness always troubled him. His mother's death only strengthened this feeling. At this stage, Sursinhji shared his pains and tears with his dear friend Vajsurwala, who remained his only close friend throughout his life time. Besides, his eyesight being weak, Sursinhji had often to go to Bombay for treatment. These frequent visits interrupted his studies a great deal. He could not gain much from formal education but the loss was more than substituted by the study of literature - English as well as Sanskrit and contemporary Gujarati.

As a child Sursinhji was extremely introvert. Circumstances made his sensitive nature inclined to asceticism. He disliked staying in Lathi and often thought of becoming a "Vairagi". This feeling was there with him till he was married at the age of fifteen. He was married to the princesses of Roha in Kutch and Kotda Sangani in Saurashtra. He met his wives two years later and fell in love at first sight with the princess of Roha. Her name was Rajba. The other wife Anandiba did not appeal to him much.

Marriage with Rajba, who was later named Ramaba distracted him from his studies further. By a special permission, he got both his wives to stay with him at Rajkot. This made him so much involved in domestic life that he found little inclination or time for studies. Later on he left it half way, never to complete it. One incident relating to this period is remarkable.

During his last year at the school, the students were taken for an educational tour all over India. Sursinhji hated it very much as it separated him from his beloved wife for a very long time. While the touring group was in Bombay, a telegram reached Bombay for Sursinhji beckoning him to come immediately to Roha, as his daughter was severely ill. Sursinhji was granted permission to break the tour. Later on it was revealed that the telegram was a hoax and that it was a part of a pre-conceived plan to join his wife at Roha. In any case, Sursinhji did not return to school again. Unfortunately, when he reached Roha to meet his wife Ramaba, his daughter was really taken ill and later died in that illness. This occurrence pained his sensitive heart immensely.

Kalapi left his schooling incomplete but since childhood, he had loving and sincere private tutors who looked after the mental makeup of the prince. The first among these tutors was Jani who was in charge of the young prince at Lathi. He accompanied him to Rajkot also but was discharged soon. Then came Harishanker Pandya, a senior student from Rajkumar College who taught him art and literature. Though this friendship - cum -tutorship lasted a very short time, it opened for the young poet doors to the fascinating world of poetry. During his last year at Rajkumar College, Narhari Balkrishna Joshi or "Joshi Master", as Kalapi used to remember him fondly, was appointed to teach him economics. But instead of economics, both of them used to discuss art, nature and literature. By now Kalapi was a committed lover of literature and nature. Joshi Master described to him the beauty of Kashmir as depicted in Sanskrit poetry. When Kalapi visited Kashmir, in contrast to the dry, deserted Saurashtra, Kashmir's natural beauty almost maddened him and heightened his aversion for worldly life. Of course, he was an inborn lover too and while in the company of his beloved wife, he forgot about asceticism but his love for nature and asceticism sprang up again and again. Later on, it made him turn to Sufism in poetry.

Having given up studies, Sursinhji came back to Lathi and plunged into the political atmosphere. While his wife Ramaba was ambitious and calculative, Sursinhji himself never liked to be the ruler. His dreamy sensitive nature hated the "murderous pomp" of the palaces as he said in one of his famous Ghazals.

*Thamara Rajya Dvarona
Khooni Bhapaka Nathi Gamata.*

Oh, I loathe these murderous pomp of your royal palaces.

He always wanted to be a "vairagi - jogi", but later on, he decided to accept the throne out of a sense of duty. He was persuaded to do so by his friend Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi.

On assuming the throne, he did carry out his duties faithfully but now a diplomatic wavering between rulership and "vairagya"

continued. However, a new turn in his love life turned the ascetic into a man of the world. Ramaba had a maid named Monghi, a young low caste girl from her native place Roha. In the early years of their married life, both Sursinhji and Ramaba treated her like their daughter. But as she grew up, the poet saw the fulfillment of his craving for love in her and there followed the much talked about love affair of Kalapi-Shobhana. The poet had named her Shobhana. For quite some time, Shobhana was the focal point in his life. Clearing up a maze of conspiracies and legal problems, he got possession of Shobhana in 1898. For a short while, he was lost in the heaven of fulfillment, but soon he realized that his love was never returned with the same ecstatic passion neither by Ramaba nor by Shobhana. He wanted to love both of them.

"I love and will love both of them", he said in a poem, "Chahish Beyne Hun". Mentally disturbed, he decided to leave the state forever. But he avoided putting this decision into practice for one year and that year was to be the last year of his life. Kalapi, the poet, ruler of Lathi state died on 10th June, 1900 following a brief illness of one night and one day, at the age of 26.

A very short life indeed ! But that life was never wasted. His friends remembered him as a lover of life in all its splendour. He was a lover, a born lover, eager to give as well as receive love. Only when his cravings remained unfulfilled, he began hating life. He had a large friend's circle at Rajkumar College which included among others Shivsindhji, prince of Mundra, Gigawala of Hadala and Bawawala of Vadia. Among these, Gigawala (later on Vajsurwala) was his life time friend and confidante. They were almost of the same age and belonged to neighbouring states. Both had similar interests and temperaments. Vajsurwala also wrote poems and shared Sursindhji's pains and troubles, desires and disappointments like a true friend. Vajsurwala introduced him to Rupshankar Oza 'Sanchit' lovingly called 'Balubhai'.

Sanchit was another intimate friend of the poet. Kalapi's letters to Sanchit reflect his intimacy with him and Kalapi's abilities as a prose writer. The friendship of this trio lasted a very long time only to break up with Sanchit's dismissal from Lathi due to Ram-

aba's dislike for him. Even after that, they did not lose contact or trust for each other. It is to be noted that unlike Kalapi, Ramaba was very much a woman of the world, ambitious and dominating. She was seven years older than her husband and often meddled into his affairs and usually succeeded in her aim.

Sanchit, himself a creative writer, helped Kalapi a great deal in his literary pursuit. He contributed to the editing and publication of Kalapi's works 'Kekarav', 'Kashmirno Pravas' and 'Kalapina Samvado'. He was a genuine friend, guide and well-wisher of the poet. Along with Vajsurwala, he should be considered as the most authoritative person to say or write on Kalapi.

After becoming the ruler of Lathi, Kalapi patronised some poets, inviting them to stay in Lathi and assisting them financially. Among these were Jivanram Laxmiram Dave, 'Jatil', Tribhuvana Premshanker 'Masta-Kavi' etc., Another poet friend Janmashanker Mahashanker Buch 'Lalit' though younger than Kalapi was also a close and intimate friend. All of them loved and respected Kalapi.

Kalapi had an amiable nature easily attracted by creativity and intelligence. He eagerly cultivated friendship with people and retained it sincerely. He shared his joys and sorrows, troubles and achievements with them, asked for and accepted their advice, tolerated their whims and weaknesses. Among these a few names were eminent figures in the literary scene of that time. Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi - the learned essayist and poet, Govardhanram M. Tripathi - author of 'Saraswatichandra', and Manishanker Ratanji Bhatt - 'Kant' were chief among them. Especially, he was very close to Manilal. It was Manilal who persuaded him to accept the throne. He also introduced him to Vedantic Philosophy and published his poems in his magazine 'Sudarshana'. In return, Kalapi helped him financially. This friendship continued till Manilal's premature death at the age of forty in 1898. Govardhanram also came closer to Kalapi but owing to some reserve on Govardhanram's part, it never reached to the level of intimacy. Govardhanram stayed at Lathi for some time and wrote the fourth part of his novel 'Saraswatichandra' there. Kalapi was much influenced by his literary works. Govardhanram also advised him not to forsake the

throne.

During the last years of his life, Kalapi also came close to 'Kant'. Both were poets, sensitive to the level of being sentimental, yearning for ideal love and never getting it. They understood each other's deep seated anguish. Kalapi received consolation in his troubles, developed his creativity and understanding of life's philosophy in the company of Kant. The friendship started in 1896 ending only with Kalapi's death. Kant introduced him to Swedenborg and edited his works posthumously. When 'Kant' became a convert to Christianity, Kalapi was one of the few friends who did not reject him.

Kalapi also came to know Balvantray Thakor, an eminent poet-critic of Gujarati literature, through 'Kant', but that acquaintance did not flourish into friendship.

Kalapi lived a short life but during that short span, he lived an eventful life, drinking the life's cup to the full and enjoying and experiencing life in all its facets.

Since childhood, Kalapi was a sensitive and simple hearted boy always willing to learn and know. Even though careless and averted to formal studies, he liked to read, especially imaginative literature. He loved sports and music, and liked to play Sitar and Bin. Even after giving up school, he never stopped reading, on the contrary he plunged deeper and deeper into literary activities. This apparently healthy, sports loving, aristocrat was sensuous too, admiring beauty in all its forms. He was a man of tender heart and an imaginative, sentimental lover. His wife Rama was his weakness. His other weakness was his friends. He loved his friends so much so that he overlooked their vices. Sensuous as he was, he loved food, wine, bhang, tobacco, sweets and cold drinks. These last two things cost him his life.

Although tender at heart he was sometimes practical and powerful too, and at times showing great stubbornness. Kalapi could criticise himself with detachment, could see his weaknesses and limitations and admitted them to his friends. To be able to

criticise one's self also demands a very powerful character. He wrote in one of his letters:

*Mara Nishchayo ? Nischya Javan Kain Maramin
Hashe Ae Kharakhar Hun Mani Shakto Nathi.*

*My decisions ? I really cannot believe
I have anything like decisiveness.*

In fact, all his life there was a conflict within himself trying not to succumb to his weakness.

Kalapi died at a very young age. However there is some controversy over his death. It was declared as death due to Cholera. There is also some uncertainty about the exact date of his death. It is formally noted down as 10th June 1900. However, some believe that it was not a natural death but that he was a prey to political intrigue.

But nothing can be said with certainty. As Kalapi's intimate friend Vajusurwala said, "the stories of the births and deaths of the members of the royal families are always covered with fog, it is advisable not to try to clear up that fog".

Same is the case about his birth. It is generally believed that Kalapi was taken from a low-caste family. Later on, it was said to be a Brahmin family. Kalapi heard of this in childhood and perhaps believed it. His aversion to political intrigues and tendency towards "valrag", his tenderness and generosity of heart, his behaviour unlike that of a person of royal family partly confirmed this heresy. But heresy is not confirmation. Such stories were quite common in those days of political uncertainty in India. Our appreciation of Kalapi as a literary personality has nothing to do with them. It is better to leave these controversies aside, and consider him foremost as a poet who made the hearts of millions of Gujarati poetry lovers, throb with emotion, a poet who led many young hearts to metrical practices and made a generations of young men and women after him recite his sweet melodious love poems. Kalapi has remained one of the most popular poets in Gujarati literature.

3. KALAPI'S MIND AND HIS WORKS

Kalapi has always remained a controversial figure in the Gujarati literary world. So much so that the originality and authenticity of his creations and creativity also have been challenged. There is more than one reason for this.

First, even though Kalapi wanted his writings to be published during his life time, nothing save a few poems in 'Sudarshan' came in print before his death. All his writings, poems as well as prose were published posthumously.

Besides, the manuscripts, especially of the poems, were written by different hands and have variations in them. Moreover, when they were published, there were many editions but none complete.

The diary that Kalapi is believed to have written and the autobiography that he was writing in 1897 are yet to be found.

But in spite of these controversies concerning Kalapi's creativity they do not affect his popularity.

Kalapi is known generally as a poet. But he was also very fond of writing letters and these letters reveal him as a prose writer too. He did not write them with an idea of getting them published, but the creativity of an artist can never conceal itself whether the creator is aware of it or not.

Kalapi's poems were first edited and published by his poet friend Kant in 1903. The collection was named 'Kalapina Kekarav'. Some of his letters also were published in the same volume. Some more of his letters were published in 1925. Before this, a supplement of 'Kekarav' was published in 1923. Later on a few more editions of Kekarav edited and published by different people, came out. 252 of his poems were published by Sagar in 1931. We may call this edition as final for his poems, but all his letters are not yet collected. In each new editions, a few more letters are added and researchers have found still more unpublished letters. Only 649 letter have been published so far but it is believed that there are many more. In short, we can say that there is no final edition of the complete works of Kalapi available till date.

Kalapi started writing poems in 1890 at the age of sixteen. His first poem was in a letter written to his wife Rama. In a way, correspondence and poetry-writing began simultaneously. Of course, the poem that he wrote in that letter was mere verification. His first poem appeared in 'Sudharshan' in 1892. And then, the surging creativity went on finding new outlets. In 1896, a collection was prepared for publication under the name, 'Madhukarno Gunjarav'. For some reasons, it did not see the light of day but the creativity never ebbed. Meanwhile he assumed the pen name 'Kalapi' in 1898.

"Joy in loneliness For me to be is the art" Kalapi has said a lot in this statement. He wrote poetry for his own gratification 'Swantah Sukhay', but at the same time, he wanted others to share this joy as also recognise him as a poet. Unfortunately, he did not live to see volumes of his poetry published.

Poetry came to him spontaneously but he desired to be known as a poet, whereas he wrote letters without any such preconceived

feelings. He wrote letters because he liked to write them, went on writing them till his death. They contain beautiful ideas, fine descriptions and his inner feelings. He frankly opened himself in his letters. His joys and sorrows, his doubts, his confusions, his sentiments and ideals are all expressed in them. Perhaps these feelings came out in words very naturally. And that is why his creativity as a poet is revealed in the letters too.

In a way Kalapi's letters are much more vocal than his poetry. They are an effortless expression of a very tender, sensitive heart. Unfortunately all his letters are not yet found. But then, we can certainly say that if his poems poetically analyse his inner conflict, the letters give voice to it.

Kalapi was always a troubled man. Troubled not because of outward situations but because of an eternal conflict between opposite feelings. The last eight years of his life remained the most creative years and the most troubled too. His poet friend Vajsurwala who knew Kalapi very intimately since childhood has divided this period in three stages: (i) Life as a ruler, (ii) Worshiper of a lover, and (iii) Life as a searcher of peace.

Of course, they cannot be divided into water tight compartments. One phase merges into the other. These eight years of adulthood are the years of conflict and confusion marked by the desire to do all and failure to do anything to his fulfillment.

The conflict in Kalapi's mind was between desire and aversion, love and duty, this world and the other world. Kalapi expressed himself in the letters much more easily and beautifully. As early as 1891, he writes to his wife Rama "My life, along with the pain of your separation, my mind is clouded by some other thought.... a different though plays in my mind and goads me to act accordingly".

This 'different thought' was the thought of relinquishing the throne. But at the same time, he thinks of his duties too.

*Have mare faraj bayavavij Jioye
Pachhi Mari Ichchha ho ke na ho*

*Now I must do my duty ...
whether I wish to do so or not.*

Of course, during his brief love affair with Shobhana, this "Vairagya" was replaced by love for life but only briefly. After a short time, it again cropped up in his mind. This time leading him to a final decision.

First Kalapi had the conflict of "to be or not to be the king". After having become a king, the conflict took another turn "to remain or not to remain a king".

"I cannot be a Buddha even after leaving the throne and cannot become Janak by remaining on the throne I will read and write and worship - It is my nature to do so and any other activity is an adultery to my soul. I want to take the path which is natural for my temperament."

Another major feeling that Kalapi expressed in his letters was that of his love affair with Shobhana, his craving for the union with her and the disillusionment that followed. It is not clear whether Kalapi really married her or not. She was already married to a man belonging to her caste working under Rama's brother. It was not possible to get her as she was in the possession of her husband who was not ready to divorce her. Rama was jealous of Kalapi's desire for Shobhana. The impossibility of attaining Shobana's love made his craving for her all the more intense. This intense longing is expressed in the poems and letters written around 1896-98.

'Hridya Triputi' a long narrative poem, tells the story of the triangular love-affair of Sursinhji (Kalapi), Rajaba (Ramaba) and Shobhana (Monghi). The mental conflict and compromise are beautifully depicted in it. Kalapi wanted to love both of them. This conflict is beautifully expressed in a poem entitled 'Chahish Beyne Hun'

*Tunne Na Chahun, Na Baryun Kadi Ae
Tane Na Chahun, Na Bane Kadi Ae
Chahun Chhun To Chahish Beyane Hun
Chahun Nahin To Nav Koine Hun.*

*Won't I love you?
It is not possible.
Won't I love her?
That is not to be.
I love and will love
both of you.
If I don't love,
I won't love anyone"*

The same feeling is expressed in a letter to Manilal.

"If I forget Shobhana, everything, the world, Rama and all go away. It is not possible that Shobhana is forgotten and everything else remains".

And when the longing became unbearable, he took possession of Shobhana on 11th July, 1898. The joy of fulfillment knew no bounds but Kalapi remained reticent for sometime.

"The history of joy is shorter than the history of pain and that is why there is less to talk about, in joy than in sorrow". He wrote this to Vajsurwala in July 1898, but the joy is in overflowing in poetry;

*Gai Chhe Sau Chinta, Aukul Vidhi ye Thai Gayo,
Amaran Bhavine Vanakar Vidhata Vani Rahyo;*

*Sudhani Pyali Aa Sahu Taraf Jane Chhalakaiti,
Havaman Hirani Zagamag Thati Ae Raj Bhari.*

*"The worries are gone and the fate is favourable,
Our future is being woven by Fate the weaver;*

*The cup of nectar is overflowing all around,
The air is glittering with diamond-dust.*

But, this joy was shortened. Disillusionment soon set in. Within the first two months of his stay with Shobhana, the craving of three years was fulfilled and the inner craving for something

permanent reawakened. The poet cried out:

*Saki Je Sharab mane didho
Dildarne didho Nahi*

*Saki, the liquor you gave me,
-You did not give to my beloved.*

The poet's soul started searching for eternal peace. Whatever he wrote after this expressed his yearning for the eternal. The routine remained the same but the mind started for a pilgrimage in the search of eternal joy. At this final stage, Kalapi did not write many letters. He wrote in a letter to Anandray Dave "I am tired of writing now... the habit of pouring out the heart in letters also deserts me now."

Even then, Kalapi's correspondence, when read retrospectively, bring before us a man who has unhesitatingly opened himself up before his friends. As the well known poet Sundaram says "Whatever was missing in poetry was poured out in the letters".

That is why some of the unsolved meanings of his life and creativity can be found from the letters. Some of them are almost like confessions.

There is great variety of subjects, styles and addresses in these letters. Even while they are addressed to different persons at different times, for a variety of reasons, the same frank open-hearted simplicity of style and expression is found in them. Whatever prose Kalapi has written, most of it is in the form of these letters. The first obvious characteristic of this prose is simplicity and gracefulness. The addressed persons differ, so does the subject matter but the natural gracefulness of the poet is never absent anywhere.

Kalapi's sentiments, sensitivity, his generosity, curiosity, studiousness, carefree fearlessness and thoughtfulness are expressed in these letters with rare frankness. He wrote to

communicate and that is why in all the letters, he was aware of the person whom he was writing to.

Eventhough they reflect Kalapi's mind and personality to a great extent and they bring out almost a true account of the events of his life, they cannot be and should not be taken as historical documents. The human mind is a complex phenomenon and any final opinion should be given with discrimination. Especially a personality like Kalapi's always tends to poetry even in the letters. The emotions are expressed powerfully without inhibition and also without any idea of providing historical documentation. Whatever we find from these letters should be taken as simply one more way, a personal way of the poet to bring out the emotions in words.

4. KALAPI'S POETRY - BEAUTY OF TRUTHFULNESS

Kalapi, the most popular among the Gujarati poets of modern age, is primarily a poet of beauty and love. His creation is vast, quick and varied. He wrote nearly 252 long and short poems during a very brief period of six years. Of these, 150 poems were written just within two years - 1896 to 1898. The two years preceding and following these also were creative but somewhat slow in outcome. His creation was continuous. Some times, he wrote one or two poems within a day. Some poems took months to be completed, but as he himself said, "For me, twenty four lines is a matter of five minutes " and as a result, he spins out lines after lines one after another at a time. Perhaps owing to this ability , some of his longer poems also are written at a single sitting. He has tried his hand at a variety of poetic forms- from four-line slokas to a poem of epical dimension. A prolific writer, whatever he felt, saw, digested was immediately and compulsively poured out on paper and that is the reason of his writing so much in so short a time. The amount of writing he did has attracted his readers and critics, alike making him a constant object of discussion, favourable and not so favourable. His life also attracted attention making him a somewhat romantic figure but that is not the only reason for the attention being paid to him.

The most discernible characteristics of his poetic works are spontaneity and genuineness of feeling. This feeling sung out in sweet melodious verses immediately wins the heart of the readers. Besides he deals with subjects eternally favourite with poets - love, nature God and human life. He excels in lyrics but has successfully tried his hand on other forms as well. His lyrics are mainly in metrical forms and ghazals.

Singing of the Light of Love Ghazals

Kalapi wrote nearly 58 ghazals. This poetic form has always remained popular with Gujarati poets. A lot of Kalapi's personality and poetic creativity is expressed in his ghazals. Kalapi's ghazals have one very good quality. He has captured the mood and tone of ghazals very well. Every characteristic of a good ghazal is present in Kalapi's ghazals. He had read and understood Sufism well enough to express it in poetic form. The usual imagery of Sanam, Ashik, Masuk, Saki, Jam and Khuda have a fresh touch in Kalapi's ghazals. Like a true Shair, he cries out;

*Ae Ishkani Lali Mahin Lakho Khuda Ghela Banya!
Ae Lakhmana Ak Pan Juda Ja Kai Ghela Hame!*

*Millions have gone crazy in the colour of that love.
I too am crazy one among them and yet different".*

*Bharine Khwabman Pidhi Mazathi Zarani Pyali !
Magar Ha ! Jagatan Jagi Nasenas Lhaya Shi Lagi*

*I happily drank the poison in dreams,
but awakened now, my veins are burning.*

*Mane Ae Khawabni Khushbo Mane Ae Sobati Maro
Mane Ae Hathano Pyalo, Fari Ko Ak Din Aapo!*

*Oh give me for a day the fragrance of that dream,
that companion the glass of that hand.*

Yearning for Sanam (the earthly beloved) is unbearable. The agony felt at the failure to possess her is expressed in these ghazals relentlessly. In fact, the ghazals written up to the first half of 1898 'Gunhgari', 'Mafi', 'Hun Bavro' 'Fariyad Shani Chhe' and other ghazals of 'IskeMijaji' are Kalapi's love story.

*Hame Jane Ami Manyan, Hamothi Door Ae Chalyun !
Jigarthi Zarnum Pyalun, Tasuye Door No Chalyun !*

*What we thought to be nectar
went away from us,
But the glass of poison didn't
go away from us*

What he wanted he could not find and what he found was not what he wanted. He was an anguished soul till the end. This condition is expressed in a simple straight forward but effective manner. This lover has borne wounds in the heart without losing his spirit, because these wounds give him pain, the traveller on the path of love has only wounds, pains and loss in his lot. He is a traveller on the way far away from the wordly ways. And while bearing these wounds, Kalapi has realised - and has done so in time that one must cross the limits of individual love to gain universal love. He has to drink "one coloured glass of that million coloured love". Here he mingles the Vedantic philosophy of Advaita with Sufism. He was destined for that realisation. Having possessed his love, disillusionment creeps in immediately and the poet cries out;

*Peda Thayo Chhun Dhundhva, Tune Sanam,
Umar Gujari Dhundhtan Tune Sanam*

*I was born to look for Thee !!
I spent my life looking for Thee !*

This ghazal and a few more written in the mood of 'Ishake-Hakiki' contribute to Kalapi's credit as a great poet. His craving for God is expressed in the following couplet :

*Chhipi Rahya Chhe Pyasane Aa Zanzave Lakho Ahin,
Hun to Tamarun Neer Sachun Sodhatān Pyaso, Sanam!*

***Millions are quenching their thirst in this mirage,
Oh Sanam, I am thirsty looking for your water!***

The best among them is of course 'Apani Yadi' perhaps written in the best moment of poetic inspiration. It is the culmination of Kalapi's craving for the eternal.

*Mashukona Galni Lali Mahin Lali Ane
Jyan Jyan Chaman, Jyan Jyan Gulo, Tyan Tyan Nishani Apni,
Kismat Karave Bhul To Bhulo Kari Nakhun Badhi,
Chhe Akhare To Aekali Ne Aej Yadi Apni.*

***It is your crimson that is visible
in the redness of the beloved cheeks,
whenever there are gardens and flowers
there are your signs .***

***I am ready to make all blunders
that fate drives me to make.
But that is the last and the only***

The light and spirit of love - individual and universal, is thus expressed in Kalapi's ghazals.

So far as the form of these ghazals is concerned one has to admit that Kalapi is far from perfect. The accepted norms of ghazal as a poetic form are mostly absent and wherever they are present, they are weak. Ghazals are usually written in accepted Arabic Persian metrical forms. From a detailed study of his 'shers', it appears that Kalapi was not an expert in metrical forms.

Sometimes his grip over the meter is lost half way and at times a lot of compromise becomes necessary to match the words to the meters. His employment of Arabic-Persian words is also not very apt. Sometimes his Arabic meters bear the rhythm mixed up

with impression of our 'Matric' meters like 'Harigit'. 'Harigit' sets very closely with "Rajaz (Musamman Salim) "which was very popular in those days. Moreover, one of the most important requirements of ghazals is that each 'sher' must be self-sufficient in meaning. Kalapi ignored this also. He ignored the specific and necessary rhyme scheme as well. The number of 'shers', if all of them are equally excellent is not a limit but it is a rare poetic feat. Kalapi wrote many 'shers' and they were all not very excellent.

This lack of preciseness and self-control, Kalapi could never overcome. He never had the time or patience for that. His ghazals are not perfect in form but they are intense and powerful, that is why some of his 'shers' have become immortal. They have the mood typical of a ghazal and that makes his readers recite them not once but again and again. Among the poets writing ghazals, Kalapi is not perfect but still, he is one of the most likeable.

Singing of Nature and Love - Kalapi's Lyrics

The mood of love in all its facets is delineated much more powerfully and with perfection in his lyrics. Kalapi's lyrics have one subject in abundance and that is love. His craving for love throughout his life is intensely but delicately expressed in lyrics. He writes in one of his very well-known poem 'Janma Divas' (The Birthday) "I lost my peace in yearning for love, but never did I see the sweet wings of joy". This couplet from that poem written on his 24th birthday brings out his anguish. Was that the anguish only an unfulfilled love? Perhaps not. It was for something beyond all the troubles and tribulations of life. He always felt deep inside his heart that he was not an ordinary human being. In the same poem, he says; "I am a Yogi travelling through endless ages. And I will be going through endless ages still". He felt that he is unhappy not because of any troubles but because "his spirits do not match with this world". He says "Happy I am but it is merely a dream and why to love a dream? Oh, show me, something everlasting."

Kalapi knew that love is not everlasting and nor is life. The craving, the desire for something everlasting is the cry heard again and again in his poems. His lyrics though sweet and melodious have this streak of tearfulness in them. Kalapi's poetry is criticised as being too 'Tearful' and he has been named "a poet of tears" but this tearfulness is not a wailing in helplessness. He also describes the joy of togetherness in love, but his poetry as an echo of his circumstances could not but be tragic. Kalapi's life was tragic and so is his poetry.

The yearning for love in the individual and universe as a whole is transmitted to the love of nature. Next to love, Kalapi's favourite topic is beauty. Sundaram has rightly said 'Love and beauty are the two tunes in which his (Kalapi's) poetry mainly sings'. He was fascinated by the beauty of nature in all its aspects. He has successfully delineated the picturesque charm and grandeur of all the elements of nature - trees, flowers, grass, stars, the sun, the moon, birds and animals also. One such poem 'Vanma Ak Prabhat' beautifully describes, as the title suggests, morning in the forest. He tried to lose himself in nature, tried to seek escape from his sorrows, and looked for, the presence of the Almighty in nature. Nature fascinated him by its beauty and mystery but he could not find his confidante in nature too. His search was in vain.

Kalapi's pre-occupation in life had been the musing and reflections over the problems of life and eternity. He uses nature poems also as a vehicle to outpour his musings. He found unity in God and Nature, the mystery of life opened before him in nature. He said:

*Nava Rango Dhari Suradanu Ahin Aaj Virame,
Janothi Mare Shun Kudarat Khari Aa Dil Rame.*

*The rainbow is there bringing out new colours
What have I to do with people, my heart is with nature*

And again Nature is the limitation of God - the name of eternity

His two poems 'Man and Nature' and 'Nature and Man' sum up his thoughts on nature. His poems 'Akashne Pakvata',

'Nimantran', 'Bhavana Ane Vishva' and others bring out his reflections on nature and its relationship with man and God. Kalapi's language as a vehicle for his thought excels here. His imagery expressed with the help of figures of speech like simile, analogy and allegory alongwith lilting melody in disciplined meters never fail to create the desired effect. Though melancholic in tone like most of his poems, Kalapi's lyrics reveal best in him as a poet and as a person.

Khandkavyo

Besides lyrics and ghazals, Kalapi also wrote a few long narrative poems. Writing long narrative poems called 'Khandkavyo' with an element of story, was in fashion in those days in Gujarati literature. A Khandkavya as its Sanskrit definition describes is "a poem shorter than an epic". It is in fact a poem longer than a lyric and shorter than an epic. But this definition cannot clearly define the literary form as it is practised in Gujarati literature. Manishanker Bhatt 'Kant', Kalapi's friend and contemporary is the best exponent of this form. Kalapi also wrote 'Khandkavya' in imitation of 'Kant'. Kalapi wrote about 17 long narrative poems depicting a story or a character. Some of them are adaptations, some have a story based on folk-lore, history or purana in them, but all of them are not and cannot be described as Khandkavyas. Out of these 17 long narrative poems, four are perfect or nearly perfect. They are 'Sarsi', 'Gramya Mata', 'Bilvamangla' and 'Bharat'. His 'Vinano Mrug' though not perfect is well known for its subject matter and melody.

The necessary five elements of a Khandkavya are theme, character, emotion, narration and description. They are interdependent and by depicting them in a well-knit form, a Khandkavya is created. Kalapi took the story of his poems from history, folklore and the Puranas and giving them a touch of his creativity and imagination, he created a few of the finest poems of this kind in Gujarati literature. The different stories and characters have as their central idea, the same ideas, that preoccupied Kalapi's mind. Love, faithfulness in love, relation of man and nature and conflict between Raga and Tyaga. These ideas are also discussed in his

prose works, especially 'the dialogues'. It seems as if what Kalapi said with elaboration in dialogues later on is poetically hinted at in these poems. Sundaram has rightly observed "Kalapi is introversion incarnate". Kalapi does try to be aloof from the situations of his story and character but he rarely succeeds. One of the necessary condition for a successful work in this form is character or characters befitting the story and emotions suited to the character. The emotions and reactions of the character- and not of the poet are depicted. The poet is a mere narrator detached, restrained, aloof but Kalapi is too self-absorbed and involved to remain aloof. While describing a situation, all of a sudden he himself appears on the scene disturbing the mood of the poem. In spite of this limitation, Kalapi's poems of this kind are almost perfect. The characterisation of the young girl in "Vinano Mruḡ", the old peasant Woman in 'Gramya Mata' are memorable. The intensity of emotions is one of the most effective elements in all these poems. In fact, Kalapi is always at his best in the expression of intensity of passion. Like Kant who is considered the best as the poet of Khandkavya, Kalapi is never aloof, the emotions of the character is his own emotion. He does not even try to conceal them. But then this is the chief characteristic of his poetry. So is the delineation of beauty of nature and the association of nature with the mood of the poem. Kalapi's musings and reflections also are present here. Kalapi without his musings is no poet. Many a couplet from his poems are memorised and recited by Gujarati poetry lovers. Even a layman can be heard quoting :

*Premne Karno Sathe Samandha Kein A Nathi,
Karan Preteinu Preeti, Premina Laxmi A Bandhi.*

*Love has no relations with causes, the reason of
love is love and that is the wealth of the lover*

and again :

*Harsh Shun Jindagima Ne Harsh Shun Hot Mrityuma
Premana Rangathi Jo Na Rangayu Hot Vishvana*

***What would be the joy of life or even death
if this world were not coloured with the color of love?***

These and many such musings are spread here and there like pearls in these poems. It is true that they are unnecessary interventions or digressions of the poet but then for Kalapi, it was impossible to avoid them. Kalapi can write long but at times, he is repetitive and digressive.

To create a perfect, compact, continuous long poem was impossible for him. Nevertheless the fact remains that these poems are not only readable but really enjoyable too. The critic in the reader may sometimes feel like excluding a few passages and make the poem perfect, but it cannot be done and should not be done. We have to accept Kalapi's poems as the poet conceived and created them. Written mostly in meters taken from Sanskrit prosody, the Khand Kavyas by Kalapi reveal to us a capable and ambitious poet, only that he lacked discipline. Ambitious as he was, he was not satisfied with long narrative poems. He wanted to write an epic and "Hamirji Gohel" was written.

'Hamirji Gohel'- An Ambitious Creation

Kalapi was essentially a poet of lyrics but like many of his contemporaries, he also aspired to write an epic. To write an epic has remained an obsession with Gujarati poets. Many attempts in that direction have been made and many good long poems have been written fairly successfully. The yearning to achieve fame as an epic poet led Kalapi to undergo many hardships, face many challenges and the outcome was 'Hamirji Gohel'. Unfortunately, he could not complete it. Out of the planned 6 cantos, only 4 cantos were written. In the first edition of his 'Kekarav' it was not included. It came out first in 1912 edited by Kant when only 3 cantos were published. Later on the 4th canto was found and published in a new edition edited by Sagar along with Kalapi's all other poems in 1931. The history of the poem is interesting and has been a point of

much debate and discussion. It was even suggested that Kalapi did not write it at all but only took the credit for it and that it was ghost-writing by someone else probably 'Jatil' Kalapi's poet friend. But now it is established that Kalapi himself wrote it. If he took somebody's help, it was only in preparing the framework of it.

Hamirji Gohel was one of Kalapi's ancestors. He is treated here as the hero. In this way, the theme of the poem is heroic. It is true that Jatil helped Kalapi in the preparation of the framework of the poem. They had planned to prepare the framework based on Sir Walter Scott's 'Lady of the Lake'. For this, they both read the original work also. But the claim of some critics that it was written by Jatil is baseless. Ganchit and Mastkavi also took interest in it while it was being written but it is certainly Kalapi's work.

Kalapi's originality is not hidden here. All the characteristics of his poetry- picturesque descriptions, epigrammatic musings, music created by melodious co-ordination of words, rhythm and meters and figurative imagery are present here.

The poem opens with a prologue and then follows the description of sunrise and its influence upon the earth. This description is long and picturesque. Such picturesque descriptions are again found in the 3rd canto in the description of evening, and another in the description of a moonlit night. These descriptions are remarkable for the vivid picture created and the beauty created by their metrical form. Kalapi was quite deft at the use of Sanskrit metrical forms especially Mandakranta, Shardulvikritit, Vasanttilka, Shikharini and Harini. Shikharini metre marvelously employed by the great master Bhavbhuti in his Uttar Ramcharitra and also by Pushpdant in his 'Shivmahimna'. There are a few of the finest lines of Shikharini in Kalapi's works. At the same time, Kalapi's weakness like loose grip over the form, lack of preciseness and unnecessary involvement are found here too.

There is no reason to doubt Kalapi's originality in "Hamirji Gohel" as some of his critics have thought. Unfortunately it remained incomplete but readers of Kalapi can surely find it as an interesting reading. He might not be at his best here but of this

poem written during the last stage of his life shows signs of the maturing poet. In any case Kalapi did aspire to be an epic poet and "Hamirji Gohel" is an admirable attempt. If completed perhaps he would have established himself as a great poet. As Umashanker Joshi observes "Gujarat has lost an epic poet in Kalapi's untimely departure". The well known poet Sundaram also has found 'richness of an epic' in this unfinished work. Much time has been spent in establishing it as Kalapi's work but not enough time is given to its appreciation. Kalapi the lyrical poet, has certainly succeeded in attaining something more grand in this long poem.

Powerful sensitivity and frank expression :

Kalapi is a genuine poet. The heart felt feelings expressed in a beautiful form combining words, their meanings and their music is poetry. The creation may be little less perfect but the artist creator behind it never remains concealed and Kalapi has that genuine creativity in him. As Umashanker Joshi has said 'Kalapi is a poet, very much of a poet'. If poetry is an expression of powerful feelings, Kalapi's words are always poetic. As he exclaimed in 'Jagrutinu Swapna' (A dream in wakefulness) describing his agony in separation.

***My sight falls on that lovely face and thousands of burning
coals of bygone times fall. My heart hopes to take rest but goes
on melting in disappointment each moment.***

Just feeling-deep, intense and penetrating - rarely fails to touch the reader's heart. These lines originally written in Shikharini metre wonderfully echo the deep anguish felt by the poet. Kalapi was deft at using Sanskrit meters. Following him Gujarati poets practised Sanskrit meters effectively till 1960.

Like Shikharini, Mandakranta and Anustup also were Kalapi's favourites. The deep, serene music of Mandakranta also echo Kalapi's feelings successfully. Anustup, the favourite meter for Sanskrit Shlokas, also fits very well in his poems, especially in his reflective couplets.

Here are a few examples of Kalapi's well known epigramatic musings :

*The unity of hearts creates an infatuation,
Love has no division of man or animal.*

*Repentance is a stream coming down from heaven
The sinner becomes blessed by plunging into it.*

*One cannot get beauty by washing beauty
To gain beauty, one has to become beauty.*

Of course, one must note that Kalapi though fairly deft at this practice was not perfect all the time. Kalapi often tried to take liberty with the long and short vowels, sometimes using exclamations when not needed. He also mixed Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian words to coin a new word and ended up clumsily. This often shocks the readers and mars the perfect beauty of the verse. This weakness of Kalapi is found even in those poems which are considered his best. Infact, reading his poems with the eye of a critic more of his weaknesses than his virtues are seen.

But this does not and should not mean that Kalapi was a weak versifier. His expression is easy and beautiful. Whatever he says is from the depth of his heart. His poetry gives one impression and that is genuiness and intensity of feelings and effortlessness in expression. He is a poet self-absorbed and yet eager to share his emotions with others. This eagerness gives his poetry a charm which makes the reader want to read and re-read him. His poetry has the charm of spontaneity. The honesty and frankness which were characteristics of his personality and effortlessness which is the quality of his pen touch the reader immediately and the effect left by that touch lingers on.

Kalapi was a very sensitive introvert. His personal experiences and feelings are poetically delineated in his lyrics- his heart wishes to say something and he speaks out but this does not mean that this

spontaneous and effortless overflow went on finding outlets., unchecked by the critic who is there in the heart of every creative writer. Kalapi also had the discriminating sense of separating the poetic from the unpoetic. Kalapi was a voracious reader. He read a lot, not only contemporary Gujarati literature, but also English and Sanskrit literatures. he studied Sanskrit prosody to prepare himself to write metrical verses. He observed the outside world, knew nature in all its facets, and absorbed everything that came his way. This prepared him to discipline his expression. The training that he gave himself mingled with genuine creativity and came out as poetry.

All the poems that Kalapi wrote are not his original poems. He wrote much under the influence of English poetry and Sanskrit too. There is a great impact of the Romantic English Poets like Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth on Kalapi. Sometimes a poem that touched him deeply inspired him to write something identical. He adapted a few poems from other languages too. 'Ful Vin Sakhe', 'Vrudh Teliyo', 'Priyatamani Aendhani' are some of his translated/ adapted poems. It is true that Kalapi rarely admitted his indebtedness to the original works. He even did not mention his sources. As a result some of his critics accuse him of plagiarism. But one thing has to be said in favour of Kalapi that his works were not published in a collection during his life time. If it were so, may be, he would have mentioned about the original sources. In any case, these poems though very good poems in themselves are not the only poems on which Kalapi's fame as a poet rests. Kalapi's creativity is much better expressed in his original poems.

Kalapi's poetic career though less than a decade long can be divided in three stages all approximately lasting two years. The first stage when he turned from a mere versifier to a poet lasted from 1892 to 1895. During this time, he was much of an imitator, or rather a novice trying to find out his skill. During the second stage from 1896 to 1898, his creativity overflowed and went on finding outlets unchecked. Most of his poems were written during this stage. During the third stage from 1898-1900 which ended abruptly by his sudden demise, Kalapi became more mature as a poet. The last two stages are more important because all the poems written during

those two stages bear a deep impression of Kalapi's personality. Kalapi wrote many poems but the poems where he shines out as a poet are few in number. They are a few ghazals, three or four KhandKavyas and twenty odd long and short lyrics.

'Kalapi' was the pen name suggested to the poet by Jatil. That is why his collection was named 'Kalapino Kekarav' (Call of the Peacock). This name fitted the poet. Kalapi never thought of himself as a great poet. He wrote to one of his friends ,

"I don't call my poems, poems. I can't believe that I am a poet .. There is not art in my life. Whatever I write does not turn out to be pleasing even to me... Poetry to me is like a sigh or tear, it comes and goes away".

Modest confessions of a poet or frank admissions, whatever we call them, these statements though partly true should not be taken as considerate opinions. It might do injustice to the poet. Evaluation of Kalapi's poetry reveals to us something different. It is true that Kalapi's poetry was spontaneous. He did not care to polish up his writings, perhaps he did not find time for it. He did not live long enough to attain maturity as a person and as a poet. But whatever we have, his poems reveals to us a sensitive and ambitious person capable but careless and impatient. Kalapi wanted to say so much that when he started he did not know when to stop. The result is total absence of brevity. He elaborated too much and became repetitive. He also lacked the necessary detachment and self-control of a narrative poet. His musings and reflections expressed figuratively through themselves like gems, do not always fit in the general design of this poems. His carelessness in form, reckless liberties with the language and lack of polish are too obvious faults to be neglected. As Sundaram an eminent poet-critic has observed :

"Kalapi's works which are perfectly artistic are so in spite of Kalapi's style of writing willfully and not because he made them perfect"

And yet Kalapi's sensitive poetry not only makes him a popular poet but a good poet too. There is something in his poems

which pleases the reader. It is certain that Kalapi is very much of a poet, if not too great a poet. Perhaps his short life never permitted him to achieve that perfection and depth necessary for greatness. Kalapi has a romantic charm about him. His poems have something in them which makes the heart of the readers throb. Kalapi once read is not easily forgotten. Is not that an achievement ?

5. STYLISH PROSE

As we have already observed Kalapi's prose writings are mostly in the form of correspondence. Besides, he also tried his hand at letter writing, diary writing, essay writing, dialogue writing and novel-writing. In all these, Kalapi's personality and peculiarities appear very obvious and clear. His prose writings have detailed descriptions, humour and epigrammatic statements along with long philosophical meditative monologues. These are the characteristic markedly obvious in his prose.

"KASHMIR -NO PRAVAS"

The first prose work that reveals Kalapi as a creative writer is 'Kashmir no Pravas', a travelogue written in the epistolary form. It was addressed to his favourite 'Joshi Master' when he went on a tour all over India as a student. The upcoming artist, the dreamy adolescent and a keen observer is how Kalapi is revealed in this

letter. The descriptions have a personal touch which adds to the readability of the letter. Travelling to Kashmir in those days of limited transport facilities was a hard task. The letter is written after completing the journey to and from Kashmir, from Jagganathpuri on 22nd January, 1892.

Kalapi clarifies from the beginning that "as we went and returned by the same route, I will not give the account of both journeys so as to avoid repetition".

First he describes Srinagar and then describes the road by which they passed. While describing the return journey, he also remembers and describes what he had seen while going. These diversions, rather, break the harmony of the descriptions but they are spontaneous and as such helps to provide a natural touch to the writing. There are also a number of repetitions and exaggerations but on the whole the account, is interesting. All the characteristics of good prose writing are present in this first prose work of his. At times, sprinkled with humour and satire the vivid account turns out to be interesting, lively and readable. Here is an example :

"These horses are very wise, sober and mature; otherwise if they were childish like Kathiawari mares the rider and the horse, would right away take a plunge in to the Jhelum river.... the track is too narrow and the deep valley is just by the side, even if you miss a step, you would fall in the river below and go directly to heaven".

Of course this ironical manner of saying sometimes leads to black humour too but in general, this humourous way of talking throws light on an altogether different facet of Kalapi's personality.

While this humourous touches make his writing interesting, the meditative touches give depth to it.

From the beginning of the travelogue, meditative passages creep into the descriptions. They are mainly in the form of his reaction and comments on the contemporary situation. He was moved by the backwardness, ignorance and superstitious of the Indian society in general and his reflections on seeing the people of

Kashmir gave truthfulness to his expressions. Like many intellectuals of his times, he was impressed by British ways and was aware of the need for improvement in the Indian society. He says: "Oh India, why don't you encourage your art ? Why don't you make your children capable ? Nature has bestowed her grace on you but you have yet to learn how to use it....the dawn is here, the sun is shining, the roof tiles have become golden, wake up, get on to work. Now your lost treasure has been found, make use of the good things given by Britain".

Here, we can see the influence of his contemporaries. In style he follows Narmad and in thoughts Govardhanram Tripathi such expressions at the age of eighteen throws light on his deep understanding and maturity.

Epigrams is another characteristic of Kalapi's prose. They are the outcome of sometimes strong emotions and sometimes powerful thoughts.

How can you see heaven unless you face troubles ?

Greed for money leads the soul of man to degradation.

Such epigrams proverbs and quotations from literature abound in his works adding weight to his emotions.

His travelogues are full of useful information as well as beautiful descriptions. When he describes the natural beauty of Kashmir, he turns to the 'Kadambari' style. This style of bombastic ornamental prose with long-winded sentences was much in vogue in those days in Gujarati literature. It was in imitation of the well known Sanskrit work 'Kadambari' by Ban Bhatt. This is one of the most beautiful features of 'Kashmirno Pravas'. Artistic word pictures in ornamental onomatopoeic prose are used to describe the heavenly beauty of Kashmir. This style is found in the description of the river Jhelum, Dal lake, the beautiful morning, Vullar lake and many other scenes of natural beauty which almost maddened the poet. He drank in the beauty of Kashmir and described it in poetic prose. The minuteness of observation and the depth of feeling touch the heart of the reader. The reader

happily shares the wonder and joy experienced by the writer.

Especially the description of sun set which covers nearly one page in a single sentence and many other such descriptions show that Kalapi was not only a sensitive person but was well-acquainted with the language and was capable to use it in an impressive style.

The power behind these expressions was the wonder and joy felt at the sight of nature's beauty in abundance. The pain felt by the author on leaving is described in a manner which brings out the imaginative and dreamy nature of the poet.

*And we left that Heaven, the happiness is lost.....
the wonderful beauty will be seen only in dreams, the song
of the birds and roar of the water of Jhelum will be heard
only in sleep..... what even if I cry ?*

The heart rending pain is beautifully vocalised in the last sentence.

The last part of the travelogue contains the author's advice to the reader about the need and advantages of travel. This straight preaching mars the overall beauty of the work. But except for this one weak point, the work is extremely readable.

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

'Swedenborg's religious discourses' is a long essay written in the form of a letter to Kant by Kalapi on 17th April, 1898, from Gopnath. The chief reason of writing it was the religious doubts raised by the reading of Swedenborg's books on Christian beliefs and the refutation of the beliefs expressed by Swedenborg.

Swedenborg was a Christian priest-philosopher. His religious discourses influenced Kant to be a convert to Christianity. But not so with Kalapi. Kalapi was fairly impressed by Swedenborg's

ideas and style but his own background knowledge and beliefs were too firm to be shaken by Swedenborg. In the very beginning of the essay he says "Swedenborg was a priest, philosopher... .. he was a true Christian.... he is more of a poet than a philosopher. Standing between poetry and philosophy, he could not impress the world well enough... I am writing this to see where my ideas stand and to find out what I could get from Swedenborg and to find out the differences in our opinions". Through this letter, he intends to evaluate the ideas expressed by Swedenborg.

Even though this is a long letter, only the first section and the last section have some personal references. The section on the discussion about marital love and extra-marital love appears to have been added later on. The address 'Brother' is frequent. Except for these distractions, the writing is more of an essay than a letter. In all, there are 46 sections in the letter. The content as Kalapi himself clarifies is not only of the concern of the letter writer and the addressee but of the concern of 'All' and for 'common good'.

Even though Kalapi refutes the ideas expressed by the writer, he nevertheless appreciates him. He almost worships him but begs to differ with him. Comparing Swedenborg's ideas with Vedantic philosophy and Gopibhava expressed by the Vaishnavs, he politely but firmly tries to differ and point out the limitations of the writer. Kalapi himself had a very firm background in various schools of Hindu philosophy and Sufism too. He very modestly but systematically and logically convinces the reader about his own arguments.

Here in these discourses, we find one more facet of Kalapi as a prose writer. In this philosophical discussion, he knows that to convince and persuade the readers, one must present the thoughts in a simple, direct and clear style. Logical development of thought and its systematic presentation is inevitably necessary. Kalapi with his short and powerful sentences, apt metaphors and beautiful allegories succeeds in his aim.

Kalapi refutes Swedenborg's idea while comparing them with Hindu thoughts. He writes "The greater part of the world believes that the world is improving whereas Swedenborg believes

it is fast declining. If Swidenborge is firm on his belief, he should have been too disappointed to write anything. Why? For whom was he writing? To say that the world is going from bad to worse is to say that God's world is worsening, is to say that God is worsening because God is the world. If the world is worsening from the beginning itself, can there be a hope for progress?"

"Why so much stress upon Christ? Is Buddha not like Christ in mercy? And what about Rama and Krishna? Have all of them not left the same glory of God to the earth? If Christ is the son of God or an 'Avatar' as our religious books say - all the Avatars are equally holy and scared. For a lover, the beloved is the Avatar of God...be it a beloved or Rama or Christ, all are the same. But Swedenborge does not accept this and I think carrying Christ higher than other Avatars indicates his narrow belief".

"Religious discourses" reveal Kalapi's full grown intellect mature, discriminating and effectively expressive.

"DIALOGUES"

During 1899-1900, Kalapi tried his hand at one more form of prose-writing and the outcome was "Dialogues". As the years of writing indicate they were written in the last stages of his life. Probably they were written within a very short time in two stages and the last two were written in just a single sitting. Kalapi had the habit of writing too much at a time. Even though they were written within just a few days, the mental work for it, the process of thinking had continued for a long time.

Infact, the thinking and meditation that began with the tour to Kashmir continued incessantly throughout the period and came out in the form of Dialogues in December, 1899. While they were being conceived, Kalapi was reading Plato's dialogues and books on Theosophy. He wrote about his plan to write dialogues in a letter to Govardhanram on 9th November, 1899. The idea of writing them was given to him by Kant. The book that inspired him was

Landor's: "Imaginary Conversations" and thoughts were provoked by the reading of Theosophy and Swedenborge. Although the characters have been taken from Folk Lore, the writing has originality. This originality itself is Kalapi's creativity.

In "Religious Discourses", Kalapi uses prose to express his serious thoughts, in 'Dialogues' he uses prose to express philosophical contemplations. These dialogues are (i) "Jesal and Toral" (ii) "Menavati and Gopichand" (iii) "Bhartruhari and Vikram", and (iv) "Jalandhar and Gopichand". As the stories of these dialogues are familiar, the subject matter is not of much importance. The author's confusions about the larger issues of life and the compromise that he had arrived at after passing through a great emotional turmoil are presented here in the dialogues between pairs of characters who also are in more or less similar situations. The presentation is dramatic and Kalapi has used all the devices to make them lively, interesting and artistic. In general, the form of all the dialogues opens at a critical and decisive moment in the life of one character and the other helps him to solve it by his guidance. The relationship of the character thus becomes that of teacher-disciple and the love and respect is maintained throughout and the dialogue becomes life-like and natural.

All dialogues are centred around only one problem - the problem of life. The characters are in search of the meaning of life, something that is eternal, something that can give them joy and peace - permanent in this world and the other world. They at last get the knowledge - the knowledge is painful to get but it is a joy to gain it. The characters of these dialogues are desirous to get that joy and their situation - each is at a different turning point of life - provide interest to the reader.

The first dialogue 'Jesal and Toral' is based on a very famous folk tale from Kutch-Saurashtra - two neighbouring regions in Gujarat. Jesal was a notorious dacoit, a ruthless evil man whose name was taken by mothers to keep their children quiet. Toral was a Sati. Once while going together by sea, their boat faces a storm in the mid-sea. Jesal knows that he is to die now but he is helpless and afraid. Toral consoles him, promising to save him by her 'Satitva', if he confessed all his sins.

This is the opening scene of the dialogue. Toral is quiet, relaxed, confident. Jesal is tense and panicky. Toral consoles him, listens to his confessions, explains to him the meaning of 'Karma' and in the morning, the storm has passed away and so has disappeared Jesal's panic. In almost all these situations, Jesal's mental state as well as the storm outside are described in Jesal's own words. Jesal asks the meaning of life and Toral explains :

"We live by our ego, if we live by God, then as we two are inseparable, we will be inseparable from God too."

The Karma (meaning fate) is not created by action only but by desire, not by action but the desire of its result.

"Do your work, but without attachment, do everything for religion, tune the strings of your Sitar with the music of God. Anything different from God's music is out of tune".

In the end, Toral advises Jesal to help others to be happy and with these words, Jesal fills his soul 'as if flowing' and the boat flows on steadily in the quiet sea. The allegory of sunrise of knowledge and boat of life is too obvious to be explained.

This dialogue has two philosophical influences. In the confession and repentance of Jesal and presenting God as saviour is the influence of Christian thought, the theory of Karma and detachment is the direct influence of Gita and Upanishadas. This dialogue is the outcome of Kalapi's meditations on the larger issues of life, whereas in the other three dialogues, there is a personal touch. The stories of Bhartruhari renouncing the throne on being betrayed in love by his wife Pingala and Gopichand, the King's son becoming a Sadhu (monk) by his mother's explanations of the fragility of life are quite familiar. Both the situations somewhat reflect Kalapi's mental conditions, i.e. reluctance to be a ruler and eagerness to renounce it in search of eternal peace.

The problem discussed here is whether to be a Yogi and a king at the same time or to become Yogi and leave the material world. Both Bhartruhari and Gopichand had renounced kingship. The first

did so as a consequence of betrayal in love, the other did so by inspiration of his mother who had the desire to see his son's beautiful body made immortal by the power of Yoga. First, we shall see 'Bhartruhari and Vikram'.

The situation here is that Vikram, Bhartruhari's exiled younger brother comes to the forest to request his elder brother to come back and be the king. Bhartruhari refuses saying "The rest and joy I get here in the pillow of my arm and the bed of hard earth will not be there in the pomp of kingdom".

In the beginning, Bhartruhari's 'Vairagya' and 'Tyaga' were born out of 'Ahankar' (ego), the hurt felt by Pingala's faithlessness. In the forest, he has realised that self-disgust does not give peace. He attains that peace by meditation. He realises that he was not worthy to be a king because it made him an egoist. The real joy is in renunciation and not in attachment. He sends Vikram back saying "My destiny is in renunciation, yours is in kingdom. The final solution is the same. The person testing the fruit of immortality by renunciation becomes Jadbharat, the person testing it by kingship becomes Janak. Let me be a Sadhu, you go and be the king"

Here - in the questions raised by Vikram and answers given by Bhartruhari, we see revelations of Kalapi's own conflict. The time when the dialogues were being written, Kalapi had already decided to forsake the kingship but the decision was delayed by one year - this very year was 1899. The intensity of desire is necessary for achievement, otherwise the practice of 'Tyaga' has no meaning. This idea is found in Kalapi's poems too, only that here it is openly told, while in the poems it is indicated.

If Bhartruhari accepts renunciation of throne following a bitter experience, Gopichand does so in the prime of his youth. This is the theme of the third dialogue- "Gopichand and Menavati". Gopichand is a prince. Once while taking bath, he feels drops of hot water on his body. He looks up and finds his mother weeping. He asks the cause and is told that the beautiful body will turn to ashes one day. Why not make it immortal by becoming a Yogi? "Gop-

ichand immediately gets up and goes to forest, becomes a Sanyasi" This is a very well known folk tale.

The mother persuades the youth to leave the material world. She does so by logical arguments. She argues that she was told by the Guru that her child was some fallen soul. 'Yogbhrast Alma' who had returned to the world to take the path of Yoga and attain Moksha. The youth is reluctant but his mother is loving and yet adamant.

She inspires the youth to show a firmly, Kshatriya trait, cut the net of Maya and leave. After this, Gopichand agrees and his mother gives him the saffron robe of the yogi. In the last part of the dialogue, there is an emotional touch in the scene of separation of the mother and the son. The opening scene is equally dramatic.

In the fourth dialogue, the same story is continued. Gopichand attains immortal youth by his Yogic powers. Thousands of years later, the young man happens to see the statue of his beloved wife in a steep well. For a moment, his desire is awakened and his Yogic power weakens. The troubled youth rushes to Guru Jalandhar for confession and guidance. This is the story of the fourth and shortest dialogue. The Guru understands his heart and shows him the way. The way is to go and enjoy the material world. To satisfy his amorous desires without any sense of guilt. Kalapi's meditation of 'to have or not to have' is expressed here. Jalandhar says "The desire should be satisfied. Give satisfaction to everything. The thing that lasts longer is useful".

Gopichand argues that in satisfying amorous desires, the eternal peace would be lost. And his Guru explains :

"The eternal peace, dear child, is never lost; if it is lost, understand that it was never attained. Go, and satisfy yourself and you will know what is eternal peace".

The Guru promises Gopichand that enjoying himself to satisfy his soul will again turn to Yoga and at that moment Guru would be at his bedside to guide him.

Here is a very subtle point which prescribes enjoying the life while keeping the soul detached and unaffected. This point takes the dialogue to a different level than that reached in the preceeding dialogues. In those dialogues, Kalapi only discussed about the conflict between the desire and renunciation - Bhoga and Yoga whereas here he talks of Bhoga as a vehicle to reach to Yoga. Both are to be reconciled in order to attain the meaning of what is permanent, everlasting, eternal. This idea saves the fourth dialogue from becoming 'self-centred musing'. The other three dialogues are more or less as Vajsurwala has observed 'echoes of the poet's emotional turmoil'.

Discussing the style of these dialogues, we have to take note of a number of things. The first among them is epigrammatic style-very characteristics of Kalapi in both prose and poetry.

"Repentance also is pride".

'You can't change your soul by force'.

"The light of God is everywhere".

These are but a few examples of many epigrams found in these dialogues. The use of simile and metaphor is abundant. The language is fitting to the tone and mood of the speech. Colloquial simple language is used to describe the surroundings.

The figurative language makes the highly philosophical content of the dialogue easy and interesting to read. The author is well aware of the form he is using. The dramatic situations are presented with vividness in short and simple sentences ;

"Will he save me? The sinner? No, No, none shall save me. See, see, see, the boat is about to strike the rock, the mothers are screaming, clinging to their children, Oh, what a cry. My heart is trembling...Oh...." (Jesal and Toral).

"Then my brother, the first thing to know is that no evil lasts forever." (Bhartruhari and Vikram).

These speeches have the capacity of 'Vachik Abhinaya' in them. Such sentences leave a lasting effect upon the reader's mind.

As we have already seen these dialogues were the result of Kalapi's reading of philosophy and his personal reflections. Even after writing them, he did not stop reading and noting down his reactions in his letters to his friends. In December 1899, he was even initiated formally to Theosophy. In one of his letters to a friend, he expressed his desire to bring Swedenborgian thoughts before Gujarati reading people and that intention was partly put into practice in the form of novels.

NOVELS - PROPAGANDIST ADAPTATIONS

Kalapi adapted two English novels by James Spilling into Gujarati. The names of those English novels were "Wreath and the Ring" and "Charles Robinson". The adapted Gujarati novels were named "Mala and Mudrika" and "Nari Hridaya". The latter remained incomplete by his sudden death and was later on completed by Ramnik Dalal and was published in 1933 by Ramnik Mehta with a preface by Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai an eminent novelist of Gandhian Era - It was he who named the novel.

There is not much that is original in these two works. The original novels are not highly literary works and it was because of their message that Kalapi wanted to adapt them in Gujarati. We cannot evaluate them from the point of view of originality and creativity.

The novels have as their background, the conflict between orthodoxy and reform, cynicism and intellectualism which was at its peak in the middle of the 19th century. The characters and incidents fit into that atmosphere. The novels are of importance only because of a new form and prose style attempted by Kalapi. The story and characters are not original. The language used is not much different from that he used in his other prose works. The style of story telling and dialogues is interesting but not gripping.

Compared to his other works, these novels have not much importance. Kalapi adapted them only because he was influenced by the thought content of the novels. They are not very great novels and do not merit more than their names being mentioned in the list of Kalapi's works.

CONCLUSION

Kalapi has done a good amount of prose work. His poems are given much importance. No doubt they have given him popularity, but his prose work also is quite noteworthy. Whatever prose he wrote, his letters and his other works reveal him to us as a capable prose writer. He had handled his tools well. His prose has all the characteristics of good prose written in those days. Of course, his reading of English language and following it mechanically sometimes make his Gujarati vague and incomprehensible. He uses Arabic and Persian words clumsily and his style becomes complex. Except for these weakness, he has his individual style of prose writing and he can be placed among leading prose writers of Gujarati literature.

6. SUMMING UP

In the preceding pages, we have glanced at Kalapi's works and personality. He rises up as an admirable man and an able artist. The short life that he lived and the troubles and tribulations that he went through made him a mature person. He might not be a superman. He did have the faults and frailties of an ordinary human being but he was endowed with an ability to understand them and rise above them. That quality which he attained quite early in life makes him a different man. His life was more troubled and painful rather than free and happy. The frankness with which he tried to share his sorrows with others makes his writing touchingly natural but at the same time, he also becomes a target of criticism on account of frankness.

Perhaps that in his tragedy. In fact Kalapi is tragedy incarnate but the tragic circumstances did not make Kalapi's life useless nor did it make it meaningless. Blessed with the most wonderful gift of artistic self expression, he used his capacities to the full and achieved and enjoyed his place among the best of the men of letters.

Kalapi had faith in God, In spite of severe setbacks, he never lost faith in God. The blessings of Almighty he could find everywhere and in everything. Perhaps that trust gave him the

fortitude to bear the blows of fate.

Kalapi was a lover, a born lover. He loved and wanted to be loved by all. He eagerly drank the beauty of the world, wanted to mingle himself in that beauty, and still like a Yogi desired to be away from it. He was attached to love and life and at the same time detached from it. While his mind was busy in enjoying the beauty of the world, his soul was striving to grasp something afar and above this world. In one of his poems, he has described his soul as a bee tasting the nectar of eternity. He says, "Stay with the flower to which you belong that is the fate - the good, the bliss to be desired. Drink after serving the nectar of this immortal flower, take all and be content with everything else that God gives to you."

Kalapi has been often compared with Narmad - another very important literary personality of Gujarati literature. They do have a few similarities, especially in the circumstances of their life. Both strived and struggled to attain something which life refused to them. The sentimentalism, frankness and honesty; penetrating self-expression and formidable truthfulness are their common characteristics. But the similarity ends here. Their approach to the problems of life is quite different. Narmad was a born crusader. He fought and struggled to change. Kalapi bore life tribulations with quiet desparation. Narmad objected to the society, its values, its traditions, and its attitudes. Kalapi had objection against life itself. Besides, so far as creativity is concerned, Kalapi was a much better poet. It is hard to find poetry in Narmad's poems. Kalapi has abundance of it. In fact though basically of the same temperament, each of them had a different style of vocalising his reactions. Narmad is hopelessly angry, Kalapi is helplessly despairing

Incidentally, Kalapi's circumstances in life which were out of the ordinary and Kalapi's frankness about them have been given more importance than his poetic creativity. It has become a tradition to criticise and evaluate Kalapi's work in the light of his much discussed love story. But it should be understood that though a self-expression of personal sorrows and conflicts, the creative artist's creation should be evaluated by its own merits. Then and only then, we can appreciate the poet. Moreover, a lot has been said about the influences on Kalapi. It is revealed from his letters

that Kalapi shared a lot with his friends in the process of creation. He accepted their guidance and advise. Some critics have even gone to the extent of saying that Kalapi did not write any of his works but his friends Sanchit and others wrote for him. Such an accusation is baseless. It is true that Kalapi depended a lot upon his friends who also were writers. But Jatil or Sanchit were not very good poets themselves. They lacked the genuine creativity which a gifted poet is born with. Kalapi's friends did encourage, influence, guide and advise him but his poems have that originality which can never be borrowed from anywhere. Kalapi very frankly expressed himself and gave detailed accounts of his activities in letters to his friends. He wrote to them about his plans but that should not lead us to the conclusion that they wrote for him. The poems very well carry the image of Kalapi's personality.

The amount of work that Kalapi did in the short span of about a decade itself speaks of his creativity. He was not only a prolific writer but a versatile writer also. There is a consistency in his writings. From the verification of the earliest stage to the last stage when he reached maturity, the same Kalapi is present. His writing is rich and its merits are noteworthy. In Umashanker Joshi's words it is his 'frank sincerity' that attracts the reader. All he wrote does not have longerlasting value but still there is a lot which is to be appreciated. He is more read, admired and criticised as a poet but his prose also has literary merits. He is read and remembered for his ghazals and lyrics. He is popular among not only the poetry reading public but also among scholars and critics. His fame has lasted more than half a century and even now, he is one of the 'favourites' of many lovers of literature and scholars. That is the proof of his worth as a poet and the person behind the creations.

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